

## AGRICULTURAL.

### Water and Carbon as Plant Food.

If one clearly comprehends the fact, that the elements of water and carbon form ninety-seven parts in one hundred of shelled corn, he will see the importance of studying these substances in the most thorough manner. Corn is our great American staple; and as water always carries carbon with it, in the shape of carbonic acid, good seasons and good corn crops generally go together. This fact has great agricultural significance; for it tells us that where there is no water, there is no corn. As all rain water is charged with manure, every farmer should understand how this happens. Let him consider the fact that all plants and animals die, fall and rot on the surface of the ground, and throw a vast amount of bad smelling gas into the air, to be carried far and wide by every wind and gentle breeze. If the atmosphere did not receive the constituent elements of all plants and animals, except their small earthly part, vegetable and animal mould would accumulate till deeper than forest trees are high. This result is presented by the chemical law which makes the decomposition of organized bodies, such as plants and animals, just equal to the vital law that causes them to grow. One law sends the carcass of a dead horse into an ever-moving atmosphere to be widely diffused as plant food. Another law brings the diffused atoms of this carcass in rain and dew, into the living cells of growing plants, where they are reorganized into nutritious food for another animal. Map and all inferior animals, and all plants are not clay, nor sand, nor lime, nor any metal, but air and water; and the atmosphere is Nature's grand storehouse of raw material for making all crops, all animals, and all organic mould.

It is true, that the most seasonable rains can hardly be called a perfect manure, for poor land. Salts of lime and potash, magnesia, and iron, so necessary to form healthy bone and blood are, partly, or wholly absent in rain water. These substances, however, will be discussed in another article.

At present, we urge the consideration of the fact that our neglect to store up rain water in deeply stirred earth, under our corn, oats, wheat and cotton plants, lessens materially our harvests. The vitality in these plants calls for a great deal of water to feed them properly; while we do next to nothing to supply this natural want. The soil and the atmosphere may be full of the elements of all our crops, except water, and from the lack of this evil, there is but one remedy. Every husbandman must husband the rain water that falls on his land. By doing this, all the soluble mineral food within reach of his crops, (then, rising up from great depths, like water in an artesian well, will come to him at no extra expense. Water so pure as that which comes out of the sand-hills, near Augusta, Georgia, contains a valuable quantity of mineral plant food. Both trustworthy analysis, and irrigation, have proved the truth of this statement.

When the creator appointed water and carbonic acid as the means, with solar heat and light, to organize plants and animals, he gave to water charged with carbonic acid, a solvent power in passing over mineral in the earth, which makes all our springs and spring branches true fountains of manure. Evaporate spring water in a swamp, and it soon becomes black with carbon from the air and fat with all the elements of corn and cotton brought partly from the deepest sources of the springs. Our best swamp land is rich in all the materials for making crops, because water, in the economy of Nature, draws both carbon and ammonia from the atmosphere, and all needful mineral from the earth. Reader, let us do as Nature does, and we can make a rich swamp almost anywhere by simply utilizing our natural advantages.—*The Plantation.*

### Rot in Turnips.

#### To the Editor of The Plantation.

In May last I cut about half an acre of my barley in a green state for my stock, then had the ground well broken, and by sundry plowings and harrowings, I got it thoroughly pulverized by the 20th of June. I had it laid off two feet between furrows, in which I drilled "Etiwan Guano" at the rate of about three hundred pounds per acre, bedded on it, and had the beds well raked off; then sowed in drills "Ruta Baga" turnip seed. They came up finely, within a week, and grew off rapidly; had good seasons, and were thinned at the proper time. By the 20th of August, the tops were eighteen to twenty inches high and very luxuriant. Since then the larger leaves over the whole lot have blasted and are dropping off, and very many of the roots (now from one-half to one inch in diameter) are decaying; the rot commences at the top of the roots, and progresses down through the heart. It is a real plague. The soil is good, containing a good deal of sand and some gravel on red clay bottom. No fertilizer, except the Etiwan guano, has been used on the ground within a year. Can you, or any of your readers, give us the cause and remedy?

Atlanta, September 3, 1872.

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